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**Name of Organization:** Environmental Council of States

**Type of Organization:** Other

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ECOS

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**Project Title:** ECOS National Mercury Workshop

**Project Category:** Pollution Prevention and Reduction - BNS

**Rank by Organization (if applicable):** 0

**Total Funding Requested (\$):** 37,790 **Project Duration:** 0.5 Years

**Abstract:**

On October 4, 1999 the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) approved a recommendation by its Air and Water Committees to sponsor a national conference on mercury. ECOS is the national association of state and territorial environmental commissioners. The conference is intended to bring all stakeholders in the mercury issue together so that the commissioners can learn and hear various sides of the issue. The conference agenda, currently being planned by ECOS, 20 state agencies, EPA, NRDC, and STAPPA staff would be aimed at educating and informing Commissioners and upper level agency managers and would look at issues such as: the science and impact of mercury emissions, existing and emerging technologies, industry perspectives on control, international actions and provide a forum to exchange what states are currently doing.

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### Geographic Areas Affected by the Project

#### States:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New York     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indiana   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minnesota | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ohio         |

#### Lakes:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Superior | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erie      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Huron    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ontario   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Lakes |

#### Geographic Initiatives:

|   |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair |
|---|---|--|---|--|

**Primary Affected Area of Concern:** All AOCs

**Other Affected Areas of Concern:** Atmospheric Deposition of Mercury to the Great Lakes area results from emissions of mercury from local, regional and global sources. Programs to reduce mercury in these areas would benefit the health of the Great Lakes.

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#### *For Habitat Projects Only:*

**Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area:**

**Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:**

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### Problem Statement:

Although 40 states in the US have advisories for human consumption of fish containing concentrations of mercury which could impact human health, less than a dozen states in the US have actively participated in forums to discuss the mercury issue. Of the targeted PBTs, mercury by far has the greatest number of advisories. The primary forum in the US to discuss this issue has been the Binational Strategy.

In order to broaden the extent of the discussion of issues to include all states in the US and to bring this issue to the forefront of state environmental Commissioners and upper level agency managers ECOS has approved of and is currently planning to sponsor a national forum on mercury.

The timeliness of this conference is particularly important since the National Academy of Science and the US Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry are currently reviewing the levels of mercury in fish which can be considered safe for human consumption. They will be reporting on the outcome of their findings this year. In addition EPA will be making a decision late this year on the regulation of mercury emissions from the utility industry. In addition federal legislation dealing with this issue has been proposed over the course of recent years.

Knowledge of the science and ways to reduce mercury is important information which needs to be shared among all of the states and others who may have a stake in the issue.

### Proposed Work Outcome:

The primary outcome of the workshop is to educate and inform state environmental Commissioners and upper level agency managers about the mercury issue. Environmental commissioners are the only state government officials with the sole responsibility for the entire state's environmental condition. Environmental commissioners must take a holistic, cross-media approach to solve problems facing the environment.

This conference, patterned after the very successful Climate Change Workshop sponsored by ECOS in October 1998, will bring together panelists of various expertise and representation to present information and discuss the mercury issue openly with all of the states environmental commissioners and upper level agency managers. The workshop format is also designed to focus the key points and issues raised during the workshop session in order for the commissioners to explore future action as part of the final agenda of the conference.

Equally important, commissioners will learn what other state programs are doing with respect to regulatory action, pollution prevention, and research. Many of these programs, particularly those programs that have been effective in reducing

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airborne emissions of mercury, not only reduce deposition in their states but also deposition to the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes community is complex, with many processes in place working toward reducing inputs of toxic compounds to the Great Lakes. However, there is a critical need to engage all states in the US towards positive action to reduce airborne mercury in order that the goals of virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances in the Great Lakes can be achieved. Engaging all states in this workshop format will provide a beginning framework to supplement those actions identified in the Binational Strategy and Lakewide Management Plans.

As a secondary benefit those panelists from industry, EPA, other federal agencies, and Congress will have the benefit of exchanging their views and perspectives on this issue at a critical time when federally mandated decisions need to be made on this issue.

**Project Milestones:**

**Dates:**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| ECOS Approval of Conference             | 10/1999 |
| Establish conference planning committee | 01/2000 |
| Finalize agenda, location, and time     | 03/2000 |
| Panelist selection and initial funding  | 04/2000 |
| Finalize funding                        | 05/2000 |
| Invitations sent                        | 06/2000 |
| Administrative activities               | 07/2000 |
| ECOS Mercury Workshop                   | 09/2000 |

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☐ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

**If So, Description of How:**

☒ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

**If So, Description of How:**

The primary outcome of this workshop is to educate and inform state environmental commissioners and upper level agency managers about the mercury issue. States that have regulatory or pollution prevention programs designed to reduce mercury emissions to the atmosphere will have an opportunity to present their efforts to other states managers. This transfer and exchange of ideas will hopefully broaden the extent of knowledge to those states that have not been actively involved in the mercury issue.

The workshop is also designed to engage those in industry who emit mercury either directly through air discharges or through the discard of products produced to implement positive actions to reduce mercury where possible through innovative actions and/or partnerships with state government.

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**Project Budget:**

|                            | <b>Federal Share Requested (\$)</b> | <b>Applicant's Share (\$)</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Personnel:</b>          | 7,000                               | 0                             |
| <b>Fringe:</b>             | 290                                 | 0                             |
| <b>Travel:</b>             | 25,000                              | 0                             |
| <b>Equipment:</b>          | 0                                   | 0                             |
| <b>Supplies:</b>           | 0                                   | 0                             |
| <b>Contracts:</b>          | 2,500                               | 0                             |
| <b>Construction:</b>       | 0                                   | 0                             |
| <b>Other:</b>              | 0                                   | 2,500                         |
| <b>Total Direct Costs:</b> | 34,790                              | 2,500                         |
| <b>Indirect Costs:</b>     | 3,000                               | 2,759                         |
| <b>Total:</b>              | 37,790                              | 5,259                         |
| <b>Projected Income:</b>   | 0                                   | 0                             |

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**Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):**

Funds identified in the applicant match are estimated based upon the number of hours of staff assistance to plan, organize, and staff the conference. Other in-kind services include telephone, copying, computer, video, and material preparation including postage etc. and the staff time expected to be contributed by the planning committee is estimated to be about \$15,000. These funds are not included in the preproposal as part of the formal budget. Some direct funds may also be solicited from individual states and through EPA.

No other funds beyond those being solicited here have been committed to the project. The bulk of funds requested under this grant would be primarily used for travel and expenses of panelists, state commissioners, and upper level agency managers. A small amount is also contemplated to be used by a professional meeting management firm to assure a high quality conference. The success and level of participation anticipated is highly dependent upon receiving funding for this effort in order to attract the highest quality panelists and to ensure broad participation of states.

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**Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:**

Although sponsored by ECOS, the workshop planning team consists of 20 different state agency staff, Natural Resources Defense Council, STAPPA, ALLAPCO, EPA, and ECOS staff. In the initial planning of this conference, this broad range of representation has been key in identifying the key issues and focus for the workshop. As planning for the conference progresses it is anticipated that consultation with various other federal agencies, industry, and other affected groups will be accomplished.

It is also anticipated that coordination of this effort with staff from the Binational Toxics strategy staff will be necessary to maximize the outcome of the workshop towards meeting the goals of toxic reduction set forth for the Great Lakes.